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SUBJECT: TSHISEKEDI REMAINS DISSATISFIED WITH ELECTORAL
PROCESS

REF: KINSHASA 409

¶1. (U) Etienne Tshisekedi, leader of the opposition Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS), told several hundred party supporters March 14 that his party will participate in national elections, but only if the electoral process is "credible" and "fair." Tshisekedi said during a rally at UDPS headquarters in Kinshasa that the party is willing to take part in elections because that is the goal he and his party "have fought for during their struggle to bring democracy" to the DRC. Missing from Tshisekedi's announcement, though, were his own intentions about running as a candidate for president. UDPS supporters at the rally called on Tshisekedi to run, but the UDPS President did not respond to their demand.

¶2. (U) On the evening of March 14, Tshisekedi had a meeting with UN Undersecretary General Jean-Marie Guehenno in Kinshasa, during which he called for voter registration centers to be reopened. Guehenno reportedly answered that the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) had the responsibility to determine whether or not to restart the registration process, and it had already decided that to do so would further delay elections. Tshisekedi left the Guehenno meeting with no comment to the waiting press.

¶3. (U) A minor incident later took place at the hotel where Tshisekedi and Guehenno were meeting. UDPS activists,

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apparently unhappy with the outcome of Tshisekedi's meeting, broke windows and ran into the hotel.

¶4. (U) The UDPS has announced it will hold another demonstration in central Kinshasa March 22 in conjunction with the visit of SYG Kofi Annan to the DRC. UDPS officials said they intend to deliver a letter for Annan.

¶5. (U) The UDPS has recently held marches in two other cities in the DRC to call for the reopening of registration centers. The party demonstrated in Kananga March 7 and in Lubumbashi March 15. Both events were conducted peacefully, and numbered a few hundred demonstrators in each location.

¶6. (SBU) Comment: With Guehenno and in other private meetings with Ambassadors, Tshisekedi continues to call for vaguely-defined consultations to renegotiate Transition and election procedures. In public, the UDPS still calls for reopening general voter registration. Tshisekedi is trying to have it both ways. Once more, he has publicly declared that the UDPS will take part in elections. But at the same time, he has laid out unrealistic conditions which must be met in

order to assure that participation. His continuing insistence on reopening voter registration centers, for instance, is patently impossible with the short time remaining before elections. Tshisekedi will very likely not run for president, and will try to portray his non-participation as a decision forced on him by a biased electoral process. End comment.
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